wastage of resources and optimisation of their utilisation are the primary thrust of the policy document. It also envisages that the indigenous mineral industry shall be gradually attuned to the changing international economic situation.

(c) Does not arise.

Bringing of Gold into the Country by NRIs

464. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to allow NRIs to bring gold into the country; if so, what are the details thereof;

(b) whether customs duty is required to be paid on this account; if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what are Government's plan to bring about a reduction in gold prices in the country?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI ANIL SHASTRI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) In view of (a) above, question does not arise.

(c) Gold is not an essential commodity for the Government to take steps to regulate or control gold prices in the country.

Payment of DA to Central Government Employees

465. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the next instalment of DA has become due to the Central Government employees;

(b) if so, what decision Government have taken in this regard; and

(c) by when and in what manner it is likely to be paid to the Central Government employees?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI ANIL SHASTRI): (a) Yes, Sir. It has become due from 1st July, 1990.

(b) and (c) As per the existing scheme for payment of Dearness Allowance to the Central Government employees, the additional instalment of dearness allowance due from 1st July becomes payable with the salary of September. It has been decided that in respect of all Central Government employees drawing pay above Rs. 3500/- p.m. the additional instalment of dearness allowance shall not be paid in cash, but instead it shall be credited to their respective provident fund accounts.

Production of Nickel

466. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India is a net importer of Nickel in various forms and the annual outgo of foreign exchange on this account is nearly Rs. 300 crores;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Central Govt, have sanctioned a project for production of Nickel ore at Sukinda area in Orissa as far back as 1974; if so, the total amount sanctioned and spent so far; and

(c) whether indigenous technology for this purpose is available in the country; if not, whether Government propose to invite tenders from internationally reputed firms to help India in processing the Nickel ore available in Sukinda area, if so, what are the details thereof and if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Sanction was accorded for setting up of a nickel plant in Orissa in 1974 based on indigenous technology.

However, the technology developed On laboratory scale when tested on a pilot plant did not yield satisfactory results. The capital investment sanctioned by the Government in 1974 for this project was Rs. 39.5 cr. Till 1988, when the project was shelved, the expenditure incurred was about Rs. 76.00 lakhs.

(c) After the shelving of the project, efforts for indigenous technology development for processing the Sukinda Nickel ores are being made by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). Based on technology development by CSIR, Govt, have, in principle, agreed to the preparation of a Technoeconomic Feasibility Report for establishing a 10,000 tonnes per annum Nickel Extraction Plant using Sukinda Nickel ore.

Setting up of additional Check-posts Along Indo-Burma Border to Combat Smuggling Activities

467. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to set up additional check-posts with a view to curbing smuggling activities along the country's border with Burma;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that smuggling activities on the Indo-Burma border has increased sharply; and

(d) if so, to what extent the proposed measure will help in curbning smuggling activities on the border area?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI ANIL SHASTRI): (a) to (d) Available reports indicate that the Indo-Burma Continue to be sensitive to smuggling. However, it is not feasible to say whether such smuggling activities have increased sharply at any paticular time. A proposal for creation of a Customs Preventive Sub-collectorate for combating smuggling across this border is being examined.

Instructions to Use **Maruti Vans in Place of Ambassadors for Saving petrol**

468. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have instructed all Ministries/Departments to use Maruti vans in place of Ambassador cars to save petrol; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI ANIL SHASTRI): (a) and (b) Instructions were issued in 1985 to all Central Government Departments that in addition to Ambassador/Fiat cars, they could purchase Maruti cars also for use as staff cars. Subsequently, purchase of Maruti vans and Gypsys was also allowed. These instructions have recently been reiterated, keeping in view the need to economise on consuption of fuel.

Smuggling Activities on Indo-Nepal Border

469. SHRI HARVENDRA SINGH HANSPAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether government have failed to curb smuggling activities across Indo-Nepal border;

(b) whether smuggling has increased steeply following reopening of the Khasa Kodari Road; and

(c) if so, what steps Government have taken/propose to take to curb smuggling activities on the Indo-Nepal border?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI ANIL SHASTRI): (a) and (b) Indo-Nepal border continues to be sensitive to smuggling activities. However, available reports do not indicate any steep increase in smuggling following reopening of Khasa Kodari road.

(c) Anti-smuggling machinery on the Indo-Nepal border has been geared up.